423 He could do with "mād-bēt" lands as he pleased, without
656 interference from kin groups, the church, or other local-feudal dynasties.

654 Thus the present emperor, when he was still merely
656 regent, and a young man in his twenties, began his pro-
423 gram of modernization and centralization in his own "mad-bet" in Harar province. He organized the coffee-growing of that area as a cash crop for export, and, more significantly, reduced the burdens on the "gabbar", improved security of tenure, appointed supervisors to see that matters would not slip back, and instructed them to report to him as the central power. He also set up elementary schools in several locations. At regular intervals he toured his lands personally. As a result, "gabbar" from neighboring feudal estates were eager to have the protection of his "mād-bēt".

423 These efforts were a departure from the traditional
656 pattern of high feudal nobles on their "mād-bēt" (though, on the other hand, no one could criticize him for doing as he pleased on his own "household land"). The others appointed trustees, "täwālaj", usually 12, to administer their land, while they remained absentee landlords at the court of the "king of kings". These trustees were u usually appointed from patriarchal elders and lowest nobility, and were responsible for the support of the parish churches of their area, with priest, deacons, däbtära (scribe-choristers), etc.

423 In the traditional pattern there was another means
651 of exercising some central control, through the collection